



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



## **Feed the Future Ethiopia Resilience in Pastoral Areas (RiPA)**

Q3 FY20 (April 1 – June 30, 2020)

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## Project Overview/Summary

<b>Program Name:</b>	<b>Feed the Future Resilience in Pastoral Areas</b>
<b>Activity Start Date And End Date:</b>	February 21, 2020 - February 20, 2025
<b>Name of Prime Implementing Partner:</b>	Mercy Corps
<b>Cooperative Agreement Number:</b>	72066320CA00002
<b>Name of Subcontractors/Sub-recipient:</b>	CARE
<b>Major Counterpart Organizations</b>	N/A
<b>Geographic Coverage (Region)</b>	Afar, Oromia and Somali Regions, Ethiopia
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	April 1 - June 30, 2020

## Acronyms

AEW	Agriculture Extension Worker
APATF	Afar Pastoral and Agro Pastoral Taskforce
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agency
BoFEC	Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation
BoLANRD	Bureau of Livestock, Agriculture and Natural Resource Development
CAHWs	Community Animal Health Workers
CBEWCs	Community Based Early Warning Centers
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DPFSPCO	Disaster Prevention and Food Security Program Coordination Office
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ELTA	Ethiopia Livestock Traders Association
EMDIDI	Ethiopian Meat and Dairy Industry Development Institute
HH	Household
LGA	Land Governance Activity
LLRP	Lowland Livelihoods Resilience Project
MC	Mercy Corps
MFIs	Micro Finance Institutions
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
ODRMC	Oromia Disaster Risk Management Committee
OSS	One Stop Shop
PCI	Project Concern International
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRM	Participatory Rangeland Management
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Program
PSP	Participatory Scenario Planning
PVP	Private Veterinary Pharmacy
RGA	Rapid Gender Assessment
RiPA	Resilience in Pastoral Areas
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication
SOE	State of Emergency
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRM	Sustainable Rangeland Management
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSU	Technical Support Unit
USFS	United States Forest Service
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

## I. Executive summary

One of the major achievements during the quarter is the rapid market assessment Mercy Corps conducted in three (3) woredas of the Oromia and Somali Regions: Babile Oromia, Babile Somali and Erer to understand the impact of COVID-19. As part of the assessment, the RiPA team surveyed 44 micro, small, medium and large enterprises focusing on enterprise performance, employment impact and enterprise resilience and adaptation. As anticipated, the pandemic significantly affected enterprises in terms of declined micro-entrepreneurs' (especially women's) income, risk of job losses and lost incomes for low wage workers. The findings indicated that 95% of surveyed enterprises reporting declined margins, owing to a decline in overall demand and a raise in transportation costs. Nearly a quarter of enterprises reported laying off workers resulting in 75 overall job losses among those surveyed. The RiPA team used the assessment findings to shape and validate planned redirection response activities. For instance, based on the results of the assessment, RiPA is currently designing shoats' offtake with the view to stimulating livestock markets. To this end, RiPA team members are reviewing and approving concept notes and terms of reference for expression of interest to operationalize the offtake intervention. RiPA is also providing payment relief targeting 225 enterprises, each with 8,000 Birr (\$234) worth of package support in order to support enterprises in their survival and continuity. The RiPA team is also redirecting its programming to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. The team conducted an assessment of the impact of handshaking as a mechanism of sealing livestock sale deals on the spread of COVID-19, the findings of which were used to inform the design of COVID-19 Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) messaging in the form of banners, stickers and other communication materials. Accordingly, the printing of 20 banners and nearly 3,500 stickers is finalized and readied for distribution. RiPA also sub-contracted consultants from Jigjiga University to conduct the impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion in the Somali Region. While the data collection is completed on this, analysis is currently ongoing. In line with the broader agenda of enhancing context understanding of the livestock production and marketing, data collection and aggregation tools were developed for livestock and feed price data collection based on which data is being collected from 6 Afar and Somali markets, 3 from each, on biweekly basis. As part of the standard RiPA programming, all component teams coordinated their efforts and managed to collect integrated Woreda Profile data from 17 of the 22 RiPA woredas, which is currently being internally reviewed. Meanwhile, all component teams continued to initiate new partnerships and engage with existing ones including strengthening linkages with RiPA South, the Lowland Resilience Program (LLRP), Ministry of Agriculture's Feed and Quarantine Directorates as well as with Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) on their experience of One Stop Shop (OSS) establishment (See Annex A for success stories on Participatory Rangeland Management). In order to strengthen its response capacity, RiPA continued recruiting staff both at Addis and field offices' levels. For instance, recruitment of 4 Advisors for Afar, and Addis based MEL-GIS Advisor was finalized. Further recruitments are underway for MEL-Manager and field based nutrition and CLA staffing positions. Another key progress during the quarter pertained to the submission of agreements to 2 of the regional governments and ongoing finalization based on feedback while preparations are made to submit to Oromia Region. Targeted internal capacity enhancement efforts resulted in 21 (7 female) RiPA: MC and CARE staff participation in basic gender training. Meanwhile, RiPA submitted its MEL Plan and received feedback, on its Y1 DIP as well, based on which teams are currently finalizing the documents.

## II. Updates from the quarter

### Overall updates

#### i. Summary of Activities and Key Results and Achievements

Building on key start up activities implemented in the last quarter, RiPA North continued implementation of its key standard and redirection activities during this quarter. Accordingly, the following major achievements can be highlighted:

- The Afar RiPA Cluster Manager submitted the Mercy Corps-CARE regional agreement to the Afar regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation (BoFEC) and the 3 signatory bureaus: Disaster Risk Management (DRM), Bureau of Livestock and Natural Resource Development (BoLANRD) and Bureau of Health (BoH); currently finalizing agreements based on comments received; The CARE RiPA team completed the development and review of the project work plan and budget allocation for DRM related interventions in Afar, Somali and Oromia regions;
- Staff recruitment including 4 Specialists on CLA, Gender, Natural Resources Management (NRM) and DRM for Afar Region and an M&E/GIS Advisor for the entire RiPA project is finalized;
- Pending interviews, the recruitment of 2 NRM/DRM specialists for Oromia and Somali and a gender specialist for Somali Region is on process; having written exams administered and qualified candidates shortlisted for interview; applications are received for MEL Manager position while recruitment of regional nutrition staff is also underway;
- Woreda profile data of 17 RiPAs woredas is collected in this quarter and is currently under internal review;
- Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) workshop aimed at identifying risks and hazards associated with the *Kerma*’ rainy season is conducted in Afar. Subsequently, The RiPA team supported the development of advisory climate response messages for flood prone kebeles as well as audio recording of the weather advisory messages, translated into both Afari and Amharic languages; and consequently, the dissemination of the messages;
- RiPA DRM team is working closely with Oromia Disaster Risk Management Committee (ODRMC) and Afar Disaster Prevention and Food Security Program Coordination Office (DPFSPCO) regional bureau on COVID-19 responses, COVID-19 Awareness and BCC messaging, Conflict-COVID-19 Risk Assessment and DRM system COVID-19 response planning. The Afar project team is also working on desert locust impact monitoring and action responses with the Afar region;
- The entire RiPA CARE team of 7 members (3 female, 4 male) attended COVID-19 mandatory training, while Basic Gender training was also conducted online for CARE 7 (3 female, 4 male) and Mercy Corps staff 14 (4 female, 10 male) by the RiPA Gender and Social Accountability Advisor in collaboration with MC Ethiopia Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) and Gender Mainstreaming Advisor, and CARE USA Gender Advisor;

- As part of the Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) efforts, 20 Banners and 3,490 Stickers are printed and ready for distribution;
- RiPA staff developed redirection work plan, conducted rapid market assessment as part of the redirection, as well as contributed their inputs to the development of the MEL plan;
- Following the recruitment of the remaining field based MSD team, staff on-boarding continued not only at field and MSD team level but also at Mercy Corps (MC) level covering a wide range of financial, human resources and administrative topics;
- Rollout of key MicroMentor (MM) defining steps was conducted in Somali Region; MM is a social platform bringing entrepreneurs and business mentors together;
- Rapid market assessment (See Annex B for the full report) was conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on the livestock sector in Somali Region;
- Virtual meetings were conducted with the Feed Directorate and Quarantine Import Export Inspection and Certification Directorate (MOA); with ATA on the One Stop Shop (OSS) establishment;
- Preliminary redirection activities including identification of animal offtake market centers, development of Intervention Concept Notes and TOR for expression of interest, mapping Private Veterinary Pharmacies in Afar Region and drafting of Intervention Concept Notes aimed at enhancing the Animal Health Service delivery system were conducted;
- Regular biweekly livestock/feed market price data collection from most RiPA woredas started while data aggregation and analysis tool was also developed and is currently being tested;
- Assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion, and on the impact of hand shaking in the livestock market on COVID-19 transmission were conducted to develop mitigation measures (i.e. SBCC messages);
- The RiPA project team focused on redirection activities aimed at slowing down the spread of COVID-19. Key activities are mainly implemented through Regional Bureaus;
- Reproduction of COVID-19 protocols, translation and printing of COVID-19 SBCC messages, preparatory work and activation of procurement processes for handwashing stations, hygiene products for handwashing stations, and procurement of public address media system to be used for COVID-19 awareness raising were conducted; and
- The RiPA North and South CLA teams managed to bring the Key Personnel of both consortiums together to foster points of strategic complementarity between components of both projects.

The RiPA team submitted its MEL Plan to USAID by mid-May and subsequently received feedback based on which adjustments are currently being made for finalization of the plan. RiPA cautiously navigates the context for the implementation of the standard RiPA. Meanwhile, RiPA continues to push for progress, working and seeking ways to move the RiPA project activities forward, despite the multiple constraints and challenges holding the team back, within the limits of acceptable COVID-19 and security and stability boundaries at national level as well as in its

implementation regions. In line with this, and once USAID approves the plan, reporting on indicator progress will begin.

## **ii. Coordination and Management**

Following initial staff recruitment for the Afar field office in the last quarter, recruitment of the remaining MSD staff is now finalized and full complement of staffing is now in place except for nutrition and gender staff, whose recruitment is currently underway. Subsequently, required orientations were provided for new staff to better acquaint them with the program and to facilitate the smooth implementation of the program. Additional support Addis based team rendered to the field teams pertained to the completion of the regional agreement document, woreda profile data collection and rapid market assessment. In particular, significant support was provided on the regional budget and physical activity breakdown. As a result, Afar and Somali Regions submitted the required documentations for the completion of the regional agreement (i.e. Afar and Somali) while the Oromia regional agreement document is almost finalized for submission based on their formats.

Key staff together with the Somali and Afar Field Cluster Coordinators engaged closely with regional bureaus to facilitate the redirection activities. The field coordinators working closely with the RiPA project key staff, including the Nutrition Lead, managed to submit the regional level agreements to the government. The critical signatory bureaus for the regional sub agreement provided initial set of review comments and RiPA programme management team was initiating the response.

The RiPA North and South CLA teams managed to bring the Key Personnel of both consortiums together to foster points of strategic complementarity between components of both projects.

## **iii. Analysis of Progress and Achievements**

Activities performed during the reporting period were significantly different from the activities initially set out in the Year 1 project work plan, due to the need to plan and budget activities redirected towards COVID-19 responses. Likewise, it should be understood that the project progress reporting, which would normally be against the main RiPA work plan is now also realigned to incorporate redirection activity workplan.

Considering the nature of activities implemented being largely redirection focused or preconditions for the next level implementation of standard activities, little or no analysis of the progress against target could be made in this quarter. Key progress was however made on activities such as support to start-up of feed resource development, establishment/strengthening of Private Veterinary Pharmacies (PVPs) and start-up of the re-direction activities to respond for COVID-19. Review of secondary data to support the planned market assessment (activity 3.1.1.1) is also started during the reporting quarter.



#### **iv. Collaboration, Learning, Adaptation**

The RiPA North and South NRM team continued sharing best practices and guiding documents from the previous PRIME program. So far, the RiPA North team shared Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) plans, PRM mapping information, PRM kebele and woreda level data and resource maps of 4 rangeland systems with Project Concern International (PCI)-RiPA South consortium members.

Under the RiPA work focused on NRM, the 3 USAID funded initiatives; RiPA North and South and the Land Governance Activity (LGA), started discussions and concept design work around a one system approach to sustainable rangeland management (SRM). This initiative builds on the previous land use mapping discussions and aims to combine the different approaches currently being used by the different actors; Participatory Rangeland management by CARE and MC, AfriScout by PCI, Customary land tenure by LGA and Savory's Holistic management by PCI, into a single SRM approach. The United States Forest Service (USFS) also agreed to engage in this new collaboration.

Similarly, DRM systems collaboration also commenced, involving USAID, RiPA North and South projects, and USFS. The emerging collaboration initiatives and resource sharing among consortium members will expedite the process of the project implementation through reducing duplication of efforts, through working together (collaboration) and hence improving teams' working efficiency and effectiveness, and minimizing delays as a result of COVID-19.

The CLA team recruited a MEL Manager who took the position for two months before resigning and hence the position had to be advertised again for which more than 400 applications were received. Shortlisting and interviewing of candidates and finalization of the recruitment will be conducted next quarter. Meanwhile, as noted above, recruitment of the MEL-GIS Advisor and M&E Specialist for the Afar Cluster was finalized while candidates for CLA Specialist position for Somali Region and candidates for CLA Officer's position for Dire Dawa are shortlisted and recruitment will be finalized next quarter.

In general, the CLA team played a key role in the drafting and finalization of the RiPA MEL Plan, the Year 1 Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) and the three regional government agreements. In addition, the team played a crucial role developing design and analysis tools for the different assessments including the woreda profile, the rapid market assessment, impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion, livestock market handshaking SBCC, and livestock, feed and consumer price tracking tools. As well, the CLA-MEL team's ongoing engagement with the RiPA South CLA team proved to be useful for both projects. The CLA team conducted an After Action Review (AAR) with relevant team members to learn from the experiences of the rapid market assessment. Key takeaways from the AAR include the following: the importance of striking the right balance in conducting the assessment rapidly while ensuring the requirements for the basic



minimum data collection are fulfilled; availing adequate logistics facilities; informing respondents including government stakeholders ahead of time, or at least allocating adequate time to ensure inclusiveness in targeting diverse businesses. The CLA team plans to use these takeaways to better inform the design and implementation of similar assessments.

## **Component updates**

### **Component 1: Improved Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Systems and Capacity**

#### **Objective 1.1 Improved DRM capacity of regional / woreda government offices**

***Output 1.1.2:*** Improved coordination, operation, communication, and learning among disaster risk actors. RIPA program will engage in existing coordination structures. Linking to the RED-FS coordination.

During the reporting period, profile data of RIPA intervention woredas was collected to assess the status and capacity of each woreda's DRM system. The study considered DRM risk and contingency plans, Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) intervention plans, woreda and community level early warning systems, natural resource management plans, utilization of local Meteorology data and other DRM related programs and services. The woreda data was collected from different government offices, Microfinance Institution (MFIs) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and later reviewed by the respective program advisors and technical team members of the project. The woreda profile data will be used to guide planning and implementation of appropriate interventions that will further build on existing resources and strengthen and ensure functionality of the woreda level DRM systems. The summary DRM woreda data will be shared with all project team members in the following quarter.

CARE DRM team received formal request from Afar region BoLANRD for financial and logistic support on desert locust monitoring and control. The request stated the unexpected large area coverage and infestation of desert locust at hopper and swarm stages. The team is critically reviewing the Government's proposal to identify key areas of collaboration that will enable government to avert the problem as far as possible. Efforts were geared towards encouraging government to take practical actions that address the problem (for example community mobilization - where possible) although this is now constrained by COVID19 risks.

***Activity 1.1.2.2:*** Facilitate in regional, zonal, and woreda risk management platforms and task forces to influence improved coordination

RiPA Afar field team have been participating on the regular government led bi-weekly DRM task force (TF) meetings where they receive regional status updates on the three major hazards - the overall food security situation, the desert locust infestation and COVID-19 situation status. The TF serves as an important communications channel to learn the government's directions,

preparedness and action plans and as well as possible challenges. The RiPA DRM team regularly shares area of collaboration and support for the TF management team.

Likewise, initiatives were taken to support the Oromia Regional Disaster Risk Management Commission in reviewing its plans in response to COVID-19. The commission coordinates quarantine services, food distribution for the most vulnerable community members and resource mobilization.

The RiPA DRM team closely worked with Afar Regional Government Bureaus including, the BoFEC, Disaster Prevention and Food Security Program Coordination Office (DPFSPCO), BoH and BoLANRD, to support preparedness and response action of the government towards COVID-19. During the reporting period, the RiPA team initiated and supported the development of short term plans (3-6 months), as well as initiated discussions on medium (6-12 months) and long term (12-36 months) regional preparedness and response plans (RPRP). This work is based on the assumption that COVID-19 is likely to be a DRM issue over a number of years.

Addis level RiPA DRM team also followed up on the national DRM-Agro-pastoral TF and regional Afar Pastoral and Agro Pastoral Taskforce (APATF) updates on desert locust status, impacts and planned interventions. Subsequently, the team shared the DRM-ATF Desert Locust livelihood response guideline FAO and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) prepared with the wider RiPA North team. The guideline provides initial guidance to partners who are interested to engage in pastoralist livelihoods programs in areas affected by the Desert Locust.

**Output 1.1.2.3:** *Facilitate knowledge management platforms at a regional, zonal and woreda level for learning and sharing of risk management practices for resilience (Links to the RED - FS coordination mechanisms)*

In partnership with the Afar Regional Health Bureau (RHB), Afar RiPA team translated the USAID's COVID-19 Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) materials into both Amharic and Afari language and also worked on the graphics designing of the BCC materials. After receiving RHB endorsement, the Afar RiPA team printed 20 banners and 3,490 stickers which they will distribute in the following quarter. During the quarter, the team will print of roll-up banners and billboards, and produce radio and TV spot messages.

The RiPA team has found the DPFSCO website developed by PRIME was not working and has not previously been effectively utilized, the evidence of which is demonstrated in that basic DRM information is not available. For instance, secondary information such as woreda risk profiles, contingency plans, early warning and other related information which can easily be uploaded are not available. Hence, the team requested the office prioritize uploading up-to-date regional information on the status of COVID-19 and the outbreak of desert locusts. In response, the DPFSCO assigned IT personnel to fix the problem and regularly update the website.

The RiPA team also introduced a plan to improve the capacity of DPFSPCO in coordinating remote virtual meetings, in the context of COVID-19 safety, which the office is currently lacking.

### **Objective 1.3 Information linkages are improved between communities and woreda offices**

**Output 1.3.1** *Improved communication and dissemination of early warning information at the community level for analysis and planning purposes*

**Activity 1.3.1.1** *Strengthen early warning and climate information services to support community-based disaster risk reduction planning and response process*

The RiPA Afar DRM team is closely working with Afar Regional Meteorological Agency in getting seasonal weather forecasts for the coming *Kerma* main rainy season. The team adjusted the Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) process in the current context of COVID-19 through engaging only a few key representative stakeholders to discuss the weather forecast information and prepare weather forecast advisories for target audiences, and omitting the large community gatherings of previous experience. According to the regional meteorological forecast; the *Kerma* rains are forecast to be near normal to above normal. Based on this forecast, the meeting participants assessed the possibility of hazards, risks and impacts for each weather scenario and prepared forecast response advisories and dissemination plans for the 7 RiPA woredas in Afar. The response advisories will be communicated digitally to key woreda offices, local administrations, development agents and representatives of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities through the community-based early warning (EW) committees and rangeland councils, as well as any existing village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and social analysis and action (SAA) groups. The RiPA team is working with Government as well as partners such as GIZ to ensure wide dissemination of the weather forecast information and the response advisories to the wider community using different channels such as phone SMSs, telegram, Community Based Early Warning Centers (CBEWCs) and events, such as market days.

In response to COVID-19, DPFSPCO currently focuses on water provision to woredas where water is critically scarce; facilitating transportation for quarantined returnees; and the provision of meals, water, and shelter for highly vulnerable individuals and groups. In terms of RiPA redirected project actions, and with the intention of filling the COVID-19 awareness gap at the community level, RiPA DRM team developed a COVID-19 capacity building action plan in line with regional government Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) that will help enhance awareness of woreda level EW experts, DAs, volunteers and health extension workers who can cascade the educational messaging to the community through community based early warning committees, rangeland councils, VSLAs and SAA women groups. The plan will be shared with the regional health bureau for approval once the overall RiPA project agreement is signed.

RiPA team advised DPFSPCO on the need for activating community based early warning centers that have been set up by the PRIME project. To this end a functionality assessment was conducted

on 14 CBEWCs located in Zone 3 and Zone 1, which are going to be shortly activated and used for the dissemination of SBCC messages for the pastoral community.

#### **Objective 1.4 Improved management of PSNP program**

**Output. 1.4.2** *Strengthened Implementation of pastoral-focused PSNP activities in RiPA operational areas*

**Activity 1.4.2.3** *Participate in key PSNP review processes to influence approaches and through leadership in pastoral programming*

During the reporting period, woreda PSNP profile data was collected as a start point for the activity from every implementation woreda of the RiPA project to identify kebeles engaged in PSNP program. Data includes the number of PSNP Households (HHs), number of HHs graduated from PSNP program, and to identify the projects working on PSNP programs.

The Addis RiPA team reviewed and commented on the PSNP 5 design for pastoralist area, as part of the PSNP 5 Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) consultation technical working group. The RiPA team raised concerns that the PSNP 5 design is still predominately a highland based document and although the specifics of the PSNP working in the lowlands is referred to in several sections of the new design document, it is still limited in detail. A key recommendation offered is for the PSNP program to align itself with the Government's Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Project (LLRP) program and the use of PRM systems.

#### **Objective 1.5 Improved Natural Resource Health**

**Output 1.5.1** *PRM plans developed in new areas of PARA operation through government scale out*

**Activity 1.5.1.1** *Scale up and institutionalize PRM systems in new operational areas and PRM scale up processes - PRM meetings*

The delivery of PRM Training of Trainers (ToT) is aimed at scaling out PRM application through facilitating the adoption of the system by government and non-government actors. Hence, the RiPA NRM Adviser is working to prepare and share a detailed PRM ToT module based training course. The PRM course is intended for partner government staffs and project staffs currently working in the areas of NRM, including land tenure and governance, and on rangeland management in RiPA operation areas and in neighboring woredas. This training covers a range of practical topics discussing the issues underpinning sustainability of NRM, the principles, process, stages and steps of the participatory rangeland management system. The recipients of the training will be expected to cascade it to the woreda level actors and provide technical backstopping for local experts who plan and implement PRM at the community level.

This PRM ToT training, therefore, is tentatively scheduled to be conducted to RiPA project partners and stakeholders as soon as the government lifts the COVID-19 State of Emergency (SOE) and announces new normal work protocols in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Activity 1.5.1.3*** *Influence GoE's Lowlands Livelihood Resilience Program to mainstream participatory rangeland management (PRM) systems based on success of PRIME program (Links to LAND scale up of areas identified under PRIME)*

*Harmonization of Rangeland Management Approaches:* The NRM adviser participated in the interagency meeting, which involved RiPA consortium members and other international actors and focused on the need for harmonization of rangeland management approaches and tools that are being applied by different agencies in lowland Ethiopia. During the meeting, the RiPA DRM team proposed the harmonization of approaches (Participatory Rangeland Management, Holistic Management, Communal Land Tenure and Afri-Scout Digital Systems) and received feedback on the idea from participants. The experience of PRIME project in using harmonized rangeland management approaches was appreciated and consensus was reached by all participants to consider unified approach in the RiPA North and South projects and the LGA initiative, which is a success. Progress on 1.6: Conflict prevention & resolution mechanisms strengthened and 1.7: Gender disparities in drought and conflict response improved, is detailed in the crosscutting section below.

## **Component 2: Diversified and Sustainable Economic Opportunities for People Transitioning out of Pastoralism, particularly Women and Youth**

Despite having a detailed activity implementation plan for year one, COVID-19 has entirely disrupted implementation of RiPA plans including the priority task of conducting an integrated assessment which requires travel to the regions, frequent team meeting and interaction across regions.

***Redirection (R) 2.2*** *Loan restructuring for Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (Stimulus package through cash transfer)*

*Redirection work plan:* Following the incidence of COVID-19, Component 2 teams planned redirection response activities aimed at facilitating a stimulus package, which would serve as a financial cushion to ongoing and potential micro, small and medium enterprise business functions by providing relief on due payments. Of the planned activities, rapid market assessment, ToR and micro, small, medium and large enterprises (MSMEs) selection criteria development were conducted. The redirection will be implemented in 6 woredas: Gursum Somali, Babile Somali, Erer and Shinelle in Somali Region; and Babile Oromia and Gursum Oromia in the Oromia Region. This intervention aims to reach 225 enterprises with an estimated support package of about 8,000 Birr (\$234) for each enterprise. The amount is in line with the loan size that micro finance

institutions would provide for first time borrowers. As per the assessment, the majority of businesses did not previously take any loans and hence the decision for the support package not to exceed the amount that existing actors would provide. The market assessment findings affirmed that the planned response activity is one of the primary supports required to contribute to survival and continuity of businesses in the operational areas.

*Market assessment:* The COVID-19 crisis is expected to have a severe impact on Somali Region enterprises of all sizes, resulting in reduced incomes for vulnerable micro-entrepreneurs (in particular women), and the risk of job-losses and lost incomes for thousands of low-paid workers. The RiPA team conducted a survey of 44 micro, small, medium and large enterprises (MSMEs) between May 14-21, 2020 in 3 woredas of the Oromia and Somali Regions: Babile Oromia, Babile Somali and Erer. The survey analysis focused on 3 major areas: i) Enterprise performance; ii) Employment impact; and iii) Enterprise resilience and adaptation.

A major finding from the assessment is that business operations in Somali Region, as in other parts of Ethiopia, are being crippled by the effect of the COVID-19 crisis. Profits have fallen for almost all businesses, due to decreased demand and movement restrictions that are increasing transportation costs and hindering access to affordable inputs. This is already resulting in job losses, which are likely to increase in the coming months as businesses will increasingly be unable to pay their workforce. The study found the following challenges for enterprises:

- 95% of surveyed enterprises reported a reduction in profits as a result of the crisis, which is being driven in particular by a decline in demand (reported by 43% of enterprises) and the increase in transportation costs (36%).
- 30% of enterprises have been affected by challenges in accessing key production inputs. For enterprises engaged in food processing and livestock trade, this decline in performance will have a knock-on effect on farmers and livestock producers who depend on them as buyers.
- Of enterprises with loans from financial institutions, 25% have stopped repaying the loan due to the crisis, which triangulates with the findings from the financial service provider (FSP) survey.
- The Somali Region COVID-19 response plan for May – July does not currently include a plan to support businesses.
- 24% of enterprises have been forced to lay-off workers, resulting in 75 job losses among those surveyed. These numbers may increase in the coming months, as only 11% of business owners reported having the capacity to maintain their current payroll for more than 6 months if the crisis continues.
- Enterprises have been proactive in adopting new business strategies to survive the crisis. 45% of the firms are utilizing social networking, 39% have started home delivery and 10% have begun employing digital solutions.



In addition to the business and employment assessment, MC also conducted a financial services assessment focusing mainly on Somali MFI, which has approximately 500,000 clients across Somali Region. As the economy of Somali Region slows and risks to households and businesses grow, access to financial services is likely to come under increasing pressure. The analysis examined 5 potential impact areas: i) Business continuity; ii) Lending and repayments; iii) Savings and withdrawals; iv) Liquidity; and v) Adaptation and measures to cope with the crisis.

Despite maintaining business continuity, the Somali MFI is already being impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, due to the crippling effect of the crisis on business performance and the impact on customers' ability and willingness to maintain deposits and savings. In response, the Somali MFI has taken the following actions:

- Somali MFI has scaled back its loan collection activities and has stopped providing loans to any new clients. It has not yet had to close any branches, and all mobile banking agents are operating.
- There has been a decline in loan repayments by SMFI clients; 61% of repayments due in April were delayed compared with an average of 53% in January to March. This resulted in a noticeable increase in SMFI's portfolio-at risk (from 2.5% on 31st March to 4.0% by 30th April).
- Total savings deposits fell by 4.6% in April, as a result of increased cash withdrawals and lower rates of deposits in savings accounts, due to public fears of lockdown movement restrictions.
- SMFI has not yet run into liquidity problems, but its liquidity situation is deteriorating. The liquidity ratio<sup>1</sup> fell from 121% on 31st December to 100% on 31st March, and early data for 30th April suggests a sharp fall. This is being driven by the key trends above – falling savings deposits, delays in loan repayments and increased loan defaults.
- There has been increased demand for cashless transactions and mobile money services, and SMFI is placing emphasis on supporting a shift to a cashless environment. In April alone there was a huge increase of 29% in the number of mobile money 'merchant accounts' for businesses, and a 5% increase in Mobile Money outlets.

Based on the findings of the market assessment, additional potential intervention areas under consideration for implementation of redirection activities are tailor made BDS for COVID affected

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<sup>1</sup> The liquidity ratio is the ratio of total SMFI liquid assets to total deposits.



businesses; competitive cost-shared business grants; and collaboration with Chamber of Commerce to promote business adjustment strategies.

**Objective 2.1 Improved business enabling environment and ability for entrepreneurial TOPs to create successful businesses and employment opportunities**

**Output 2.1.2:** *Business development services and entrepreneurship training targeting women and youth is expanded and improved, including innovative and tech-enabled services*

**Activity 2.1.2.3:** *Introduce platforms for peer-to-peer business mentorship, such as Mercy Corps' successful Micro mentor approach*

*Micro-mentor:* Micro-mentor (MM) is a social platform initiated by Mercy Corps global with the objective to bring together purpose-driven entrepreneurs and business mentors to create powerful connections, solve problems and build successful businesses together. Mercy Corps has planned to roll out MM in Ethiopia through RiPA and STEDE (Strengthening Socio-economic development and better opportunities for refugees and host communities-MC led European Union Trust Fund project), with a focus in Somali Region to take advantage of geographic integration for an initial 3 year plan between 2020-2022. During this quarter, Component 2 team lead jointly with MC Director of Programs conducted a series of discussions with the global MicroMentor team going through details of activities and budgets. With the existing budget allocated from RiPA and STEDE, there is still a budget gap of around \$75,000 hence funding opportunities are being explored both regionally and in-country. For potential leveraging in the East Africa region, discussions were held with Mercy Corps Kenya and Somalia program staff to take advantage of the Somali speaking communities in Kenya and Somalia and with the aim of scaling up in a wider geographic area. Discussions have also begun with other in country actors who have the same interest in coordinating efforts and leveraging additional resources.

**General-Preliminary assessment**

*Woreda profile data collection:* In order to have a detailed and clear understanding of the operational woredas, the RiPA team conducted the woreda profile data collection based on a tool all component teams jointly developed. Currently, review, verification and finalization of the data collected from all 22 RiPA woredas is being made. Key data and information gathered from the Woreda profiles data under Component 2 includes:

- Enterprise engagement, performance and potential areas of opportunities;
- Training provider institutions, capacities and gaps;
- Labor market information, job creation potential and support services gaps; and
- Financial services utilization.

The data collected in each woreda will serve to shape RiPA activities aimed at addressing the root causes of challenges and creating sustained economic opportunities for people transitioning out of pastoralism through enhancing better understanding of the area and creation of common ground for stakeholders participating in implementation of the project. Moreover, the information will enable the project to align its activities with each woreda development plan, create synergy and thereby increase the multiplier effect.

During the quarter, detailed orientations were provided for the field teams on the tool and sources of data. Accordingly data collection is finalized in 17 out of the 22 woredas across the 3 regions. During the data collection, the field team faced challenges of not finding information from responsible government offices due to absence of a proper record keeping mechanism and, in some cases, large discrepancies among data obtained from different government sources on the same or similar data elements. Aggregation and analysis of the data and a report summarizing the findings will be done in the next quarter. The woreda profile tool will be agile, used to update the data collection on annual basis as project implementation continues. On the other hand, the data collected will also serve as baseline for information that will not be covered by the standard baseline assessment.

**Objective 2.3: Improved access to finance for pastoral households and TOPs - with a focus on women and youth**

***Output 2.3.1:*** *Target groups have improved access to financial services through village-level institutions (VSLAs and Ru/SACCOs).*

***Activity 2.3.1.1:*** *Establish new and strengthen existing VSLAs through approaches that are tailored to the particular cultural and gender contexts, including use of digital technology platforms.*

*VSLA digitization:* Following MC RiPA-Jamiione engagement in the last quarter, one of the next steps was getting an understanding of clear roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, preparation of MoU has progressed well and is currently under final revision, emphasizing on data safety and security issues and protection of users. Due to the incidence of COVID-19 and shifting priorities such as rapid market assessment and redirection work plan, this activity was put on hold.

*MEL plan Development for C2:* During the quarter, C2 team contributed to the MEL plan preparation through detailed analysis of alignment of objectives, appropriateness output level indicators in line with the results chain developed during the resilience workshop in the last quarter. In line with this, the other key activity pertained to identifying the level of overlap for participant end user household (HH) targets across the 11 outputs under the component. Based on a detailed review of activity alignment and participants benefiting from the different activities, 60% of

participant users are estimated to overlap resulting in the unique beneficiary figure of 81,238 whereas the total end user participant number without output overlaps remains 134,366 for C2.

*Field MSD team recruitment, on-boarding and orientation - technical and financial details briefing:* Following the recruitment of the remaining 3 field based Market Systems Development (MSD) staff during the quarter, detailed orientations were given to all 11 MSD team members (8 Somali & Oromia, and 3 Afar Region) on overall RiPA goal and approaches, and specifically on C2 objectives, outputs and activities, which are part of the 5 year plan, emphasizing on Year 1 DIP and redirection activities.

### **Component 3: Intensified and Sustained Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Production and Marketing**

*Woreda profile data collection:* In order to facilitate for a more realistic planning of standard RiPA activities, Component 3 team in collaboration with other RiPA components conducted the Woreda Profile data collection, which is now completed in the majority of the targeted woredas. The remaining woreda data collection is expected to be completed early next quarter.

*Livestock and feed price tracking:* Timely updates on livestock and feed price is considered as one of the critical inputs to supporting the livestock production and marketing activities. To this end, a livestock and feed market price data collection tool was developed and based on which data collection from 6 markets in Somali and Afar Regions (i.e. 3 markets from each region) started during the reporting quarter. The regular data collection will continue with the view to supporting the learning from the livestock market price trend and subsequently the future adaption of activity implementation based on prevailing challenges to the specific context.

*MEL Plan development:* C3 also supported the RiPA MEL Plan development process and provided the necessary inputs working in close communication and collaboration with the CLA/MEL team. Specific inputs on component indicators, development of Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) and finalization of Y1 DIP were some of the collaborative areas in the MEL Plan development.

*COVID-19 Impact Context Understanding and Mitigation Measures:* With the view to having a better understanding of the context, in May 2020 the RiPA team conducted rapid assessment in the Somali Region and produced a report that included recommendations for the mitigation of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livestock sector. Some of the major recommendations are: a) Keep livestock markets safe and open in spite of pandemic, allowing producers and traders to generate income; b) Stimulate offtake of animal through strategic subsidies; c) Support milk value chain actors, to ensure business continuity; d) Help sustain a functioning animal health services system; and e) Support producers with smart subsidies for feed/fodder.

The assessment finding also verified the importance of proposed re-direction interventions that are focused on the livestock offtake through market based subsidy to stimulate stagnant livestock market prices in the program target areas. Consequently, preliminary activities to start offtake of shoats from those stagnated markets through a market based smart subsidy were started during the reporting period including completion of activities such as selection of market centers, development of intervention concept notes (under approval stage) and TOR for call for expression of interest. The remaining activities such as release of call, selection of livestock traders and the actual offtake of shoats are expected to be completed early next quarter.

In addition, rapid assessment was conducted in collaboration with Component 4 team on the effect of hand shaking in the livestock market centers on COVID-19 transmission to better understand the situation and design mitigation measures. The field level data collection was completed and analysis is ongoing, which is expected to be completed by early next quarter. Following the finalization of the analysis, SBCC messages will be developed and disseminated to the targeted markets, in collaboration with the C4 team.

#### *RiPA standard activities implementation*

COVID-19 induced movement restrictions continued affecting field level implementation of the planned activities. However, to move those activities potentially forward remotely, RiPA Component 3 team discussed on the possible options and tried to start some of the field level activity implementation through remote support. The following updates on progress can be highlighted under the respective objectives/outputs:

### **Objective 3.1. Increased production and productivity of Livestock and Crop system in the Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral area.**

#### ***Output 3.1.1*** *Target groups have improved knowledge, skills and practices for productive, climate-smart, conflict-sensitive and nutrition-supporting livestock and crop production.*

One of the activities planned to be completed by the end of the reporting quarter was ***conducting the market systems assessment*** (Activity 3.1.1.1) to better understand the context of the Livestock and Crop System in the RiPA program implementation areas but limited progress was made due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, as indicated above, rapid assessment on the impact of the pandemic in the livestock sector was conducted in the Somali Region. The findings of the assessment highlighted the negative impact of COVID-19 on the livestock sector, specifically the small holder pastoral producers, livestock traders and input suppliers. The assessment also identified the need for mitigation interventions to support the livestock marketing sector. The findings will be used as an input for the follow on planned market system assessment (activity 3.1.1.1), which will be conducted to better understand the context.

In order to identify the needs of the skill enhancement materials/tools (i.e. activity 3.1.1.2) to support the intensification of the production in the RiPA target area, field team started discussions with regional government partners on the inventory of the available training materials that can be customized and subsequently used to support the activities. This effort will further be strengthened during the next reporting period.

**Output 3.1.2:** *Feed and fodder market systems are strengthened, building resilience of wider livestock system.*

One of the activities planned for the reporting quarter under this output was development of ***Resilient Feed Development Strategy (A3.1.2.1)***. Accordingly, the recently approved national feed development strategy was reviewed and also discussed with MOA- Feed directorate director on need of additional pastoral context based strategy development and on how to collaborate with government partners at national and regional levels. During the strategy development, the importance of government partners' participation at each level taking a leading role was emphasized for enhanced ownership of future implementations. The feed directorate is recommending to use the national strategy as it is and to focus the RiPA support on the development of area specific implementation Strategy and manual/guidelines. The ongoing national level discussions with feed directorate will continue, also in each of the targeted regions with the respective regional government partners. Once the feedback is consolidated, final activities to be implemented will be decided i.e. strategy development or implementation guidelines and anticipate moving forward with action during the next reporting period.

The Intervention Concept Note (ICN) focused on supporting the enhancement of the animal feed supply system is being drafted, which is also expected to be finalized shortly.

**Output 3.1.2:** *Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists access and utilize market-driven animal health and breeding services for resilient livestock production.*

Planned activities include providing support for the establishment/strengthening of animal health service delivery system. To this end, mapping of existing PVPs is completed in Afar and currently ongoing in Somali region, which will help to identify areas that need to be prioritized during the support provision process. As indicated above, the intervention concept note focused on the animal health service delivery in the targeted RiPA implementation areas is drafted and under review for approval.

Once concept note approval is done, activity concept note development and additional details on the identification of priority target areas for the first phase support of PVPs, mapping of existing Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), detailed gap assessment on the potential candidate PVPs, TOR development for call for expression of interest will be priority areas of focus for rollout.

**Outputs 3.5.1** *Key livestock and crop market actors have improved capacities, supporting functions and enabling environment.*

Even though under this output area there was no activity initially planned for the quarter, those activities that can be implemented during COVID-19 were identified and some efforts made on its start-up. The virtual meetings with *MOA- Quarantine Import Export Inspection and Certification Directorate* and Ethiopia Livestock Trader Association (ELTA) were conducted during the reporting period. The key action points identified to align with RiPA's interest are described below.

Key issues identified with *MOA-Quarantine Import Export Inspection and Certification Directorate* for next action are:

- Updating existing guidelines/Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for quarantine and enforcement;
- Capacity building support (Training/Technical) for Mile Quarantine Facility based on the gaps. It was learnt from the discussion with the Quarantine Directorate, the Ministry is processing the outsourcing of the management service of the Mile Quarantine (using Public Private Partnership (PPP) model) to private sectors. Once the model is actualized, RiPA will work to enhance the capacity of the quarantine service provider on the ways that contribute for the enhancement of the livestock trade in the program implementation area through improving their service delivery capacity;
- Stakeholders' engagement: Awareness creation events in each of the quarantine implementation areas is one of the areas the Ministry highlighted for collaboration. Discussions will be continue to explore further collaboration opportunities with the Ministry, regional chamber of commerce and other related actors to start organizing the engagement events (aligned with output 3.8.1, activity 3.8.1.2).

Key issues identified for collaboration with Ethiopian Livestock Trader Association (ELTA) are:

- Facilitating for creation of linkages for pastoral area livestock traders with central markets. This association has limited members in the RiPA North target areas signifying the importance of collaboration on the linkage creation as well as supporting the association to recruit new members;
- Collaborating to open association offices in the RiPA implementation regions (Afar and Somali), which will be dependent on the respective regional demand. Follow up discussions will continue on this; and
- Supporting the engagement of ELTA in the quarantine management service. The association showed interest to bid for the PPP opportunity the government announced to manage the Mile Quarantine. Specific areas of official collaboration will be further identified during the next quarter.



## **Component 4: Improved and Sustained Nutrition and Hygiene Practices**

This quarter was characterized by the imminence of COVID-19 pandemic and that called for strategic measures to support the Ethiopian government in fighting the pandemic. Social distancing was one of the main recommendations to slow down the spread of the virus; as such, Mercy Corps adopted “remote working” for the staff, activation of virtual working, minimized human-to-human direct contact among other things. These COVID-19 prevention strategies concurrently slowed down field implementation especially for activities that would require gatherings.

The RIPA team also adapted the main activity work plan and concentrated on assessments. In this quarter, the team jointly with other Components designed and administered a Woreda Profile tool in Somali and Afar regions to benchmark RIPA’s operational woredas. The data collection methodologies were adapted to protect the RIPA staff who were collecting the data and the profiling is set for finalization in the next quarter. The RIPA team will regularly update the Woreda profile as a live document and populate the development progress of woredas overtime.

In contextualizing the advent of COVID-19, the RIPA team set out a plan of redirection activities by taking some funds from the main RIPA budget and channeling it towards the COVID-19 response. Component 4 redirected funds from some Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) budget lines and directed them towards these strategic focuses:

- Intervention 1: COVID-19 prevention message dissemination;
- Hygiene message dissemination;
- Awareness Creation and Raising for COVID-19;
- Develop tailor made SBCC messages for COVID-19 and
- Provision of Conditional Hygiene Voucher for Hygiene Products.

The Component 4 team focused on execution of the redirection work plan that targeted prevention of COVID-19 spread in RIPA’s operational areas through a set of well-structured prevention activities. The redirection workplan has some specific linkages to the main RIPA workplan objectives and outputs. The Component 4 RIPA redirection work plan progress for the quarter include:

### **Objective 4.1: Improved nutrition status of targeted households**

Considering the vicious cycle between diseases and nutrition, the RIPA project focused on areas that related to COVID 19 and could directly have an impact on health and nutrition. These activities are intended to guide health workers on MIYCN principles even in the context of COVID 19 thereby promoting, protecting and safeguarding children and women’s health and wellbeing.



***Output 4.1.3: Improve equitable use of household resources for nutrition (behavior change) for adolescents, women of reproductive age and boys and girls < 2***

- Translation of COVID-19 SBCC materials: The RIPA project received the John Hopkins and EPHI developed SBCC toolkit and jointly collaborated with RHB from Afar and Somali regions to translate and contextually adapt the SBCC materials. Both Afar and Somali Regions finalized SBCC material translations, validation and endorsement through official letters by the RHBs. The SBCC materials will be used by all other partners intending to conduct COVID awareness raising hence harmonizing materials at regional level. The RIPA project is also tracking the number of partners who are accessing the same materials and using for their COVID response.
- Both Afar and Somali Regions initiated the process for printing the translated SBCC materials.
- The RIPA team assisted the Somali Region in the printing of 500 pieces of each of the following COVID-19 protocols: (i) Translated Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) Travel-Transport Service, (ii) PHEOC Workplace Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), (iii) Masks and Gloves SOP and (iv) Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) interim Protocol.
- The Federal Ethiopian Public Health Institute requested support to facilitate Maternal Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) in the context of COVID-19, and pre approval to proceed on the same is sought from USAID and awaiting feedback. These trainings intended to guide health workers on MIYCN principles even in the context of COVID 19.

**Handshaking at Livestock Markets Assessment**

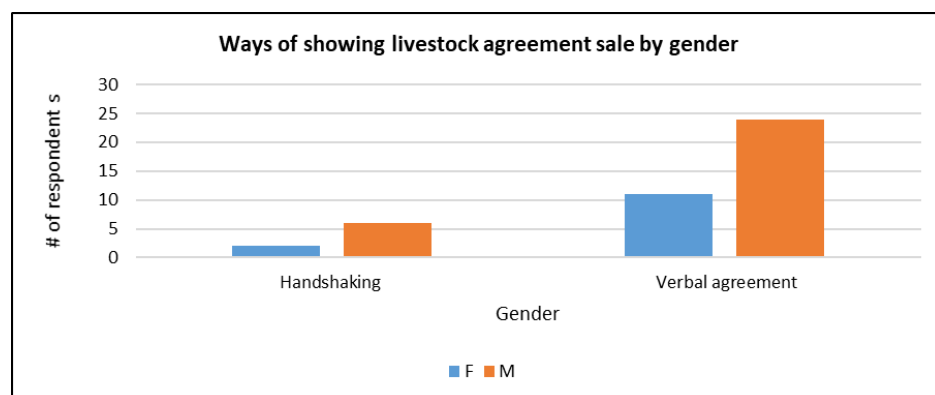
The RIPA project is a market systems development project designed with a special focus on developing livestock value chains. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Somali region, generation, societal and traditional norms which were potentially high risk practices and behavioral for spreading COVID-19 became apparent. Handshaking practice, which is considered as a symbol of sealing a livestock deal needed to be addressed in order to protect livestock market users.

The RIPA project then conducted an assessment to inform the design of SBCC materials. The methodology was sensitive because one of the key precautions of spreading of contracting the COVID-19 virus is through avoiding close contact between individuals. As such, it was very difficult to have contact with Livestock users (Brokers, Livestock Traders and Pastoralist). The RIPA project had just started and the team had to still build enough contact database of project beneficiaries and the necessary rapport to conduct virtual interviews using phones. In order to circumvent these challenges, the RIPA project designed a tool that combined Barrier Analysis and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) assessment methods and used a smaller sample size constituting representatives of the different livestock market users.

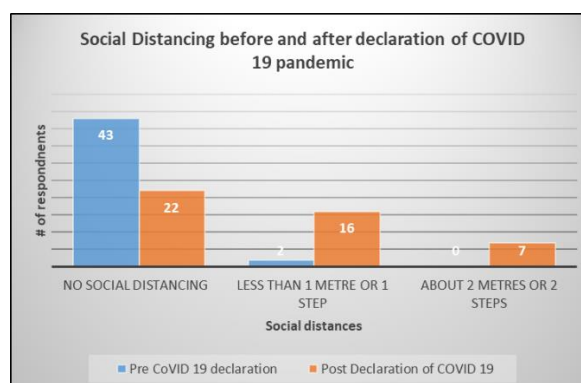
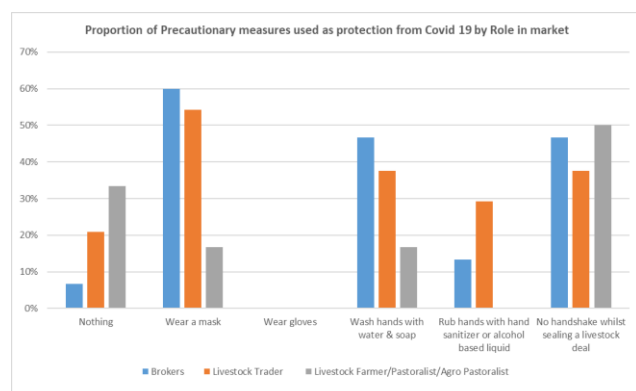
The handshaking at livestock markets rapid assessment data analysis was finalized and the team initiated SBCC material development based on analysis findings. The assessment also focused on other COVID-19 behaviors at livestock markets and it acted as a proxy to validate the relevance of RIPA's redirection activities. In summary, the findings show poor hygiene and handwashing

practices; poor social distancing, reluctance to adopt government promoted COVID-19 prevention measures like use of face masks/cloth/gloves and reluctance to avoid deep-rooted societal, generational and traditional practices that predispose people to contracting the virus like handwashing.

Handshaking was attributed by the team as a major challenge when sealing a livestock deal. However the assessment results indicated that Jijiga and Erer livestock markets had started adapting to the COVID-19 awareness messaging of avoiding this practice but the situation was opposite in Babile Somali and Babile Oromia Woredas.



The assessment also checked the adherence to Ethiopia government promoted precautionary measures to COVID-19 and found that adherence is still very low as evidenced below:



Key programmatic recommendations will be in the 3 pager, however the assessment's finding further cemented the need for the various component 4 redirection activities for COVID-19 response among which COVID-19 awareness raising, provision of handwashing stations and detergents, promotion of social distancing and use of face cloths.

#### Objective 4.2: Strengthened sanitation and hygiene outcomes of targeted households

RIPA's activities for the COVID 19 response focused mainly on prevention of contracting the virus and are jointly implemented by the RHB.

#### **Output 4.2.1** *Increased capacity and knowledge of household sanitation and hygiene practices*

The redirection activities contribute more to Activity 4 2.1.5. Promote Sanitation and hygiene practices (safe water storage, household hand washing and installation of hand washing facilities by the latrines), as they mainly focus on promoting sanitation and hygiene practices through awareness raising and provision of the hardware resources like handwashing stations.

- Afar and Somali Regions identified vendors to produce “tippy tap” type handwashing stations and the procurement processes are underway. The “tippy tap” was better preferred because it limits human contact with the handwashing facility since it is operated by foot gear levers to press the liquid soap and also tap and un-tap the faucet. In order to ensure continuous water availability, the MFI agents will be in charge of the handwashing facility, the local administration for livestock market handwashing stations and the janitors at health centres will be responsible to manage the health centre hand washing stations.
- The RiPA team initiated procurement of face cloths for community volunteers and youths for house-to-house awareness raising;
- RiPA initiated procurement of detergents for handwashing stations in Somali Region. At market places, 80 MFI agents will be provided with 40 L tanks and expected to offer basic COVID-19 awareness raising to their clients. Sixty (60L) handwashing station will be provided for 20 health centres and 12 stations of 220 L capacity for 6 livestock markets. The detergents will be provided for 90 days only after which, each responsible receiver of the handwashing station will make provisions to make soap and water available at all times.
- Plans for using the Mega Phone with Van for awareness creation and raising are underway in both regions. In Afar in the interim, the RiPA project will borrow the Megaphone and speakers from a Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) project and use RiPA vehicle. The vehicle will be moving in villages and targeting market days. For Somali Region, the procurement team is sourcing prices for procuring the Megaphone and speakers because renting was costly;

#### **Objective 4.3: Institutionalization of nutrition specific and sensitive interventions into government systems**

Collaboration with other Nutrition and WASH implementing partners is inherent to cross learning, harmonization and increasing sphere of influence for resilience projects.

#### **Output 4.3.1** *Capacity building of local institutions (through research and development, and policy advocacy, to address nutritional outcomes of the household)*

- The RiPA North team attended a meeting with RiPA South to initiate collaborations between the 2 consortiums. The teams from both consortiums will develop a TOR to identify complementarity points across Components and ways of cross learning and harmonization of approaches where possible.

## Stakeholder Interactions

***Coordination with LLRP on PRM:*** RiPA aims to coordinate, integrate, and align activities with the Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Project (LLRP) which has overlapping operation woredas (Dubti, Amibara, Gumbi Bordode, Dembel, Awbere, Gursum) and overlapping activities that needs high coordination and synergy for enhanced impact. Thus, the NRM Advisor of the project is working closely with the LLRP office of Oromia Region to ensure harmonized intervention of PRM approaches and activities in the overlapping pastoral and agro pastoral woredas of the 2 interventions. The advisor had discussions with the regional LLRP senior project staff with the aim of establishing the grounds for sharing technical expertise; accelerating implementation of improved DRM systems; effectiveness of capacity building plans of RiPA project and the scaling up of PRM system through coordination and integration of various resilience plans and projects. Key LLRP project staffs participation in the upcoming RiPA's PRM ToT, together with government NRM staffs, will enhance the roll out of joint PRM system implementation in the overlapping operational woredas of RiPA and LLRP in Afar, Oromia, and Somali regional states.

***RiPA North and South collaboration:*** Component Leads joined the 1<sup>st</sup> virtual meeting RiPA North and RiPA South organized to establish the grounds for collaboration. The meeting aimed at identifying further areas of collaboration and formalizing ongoing initiatives on collaboration by the different component and CLA/MEL teams of the two projects. In this whole team introductory meeting, potential areas of collaboration including policy level interventions, research, and experience sharing between the 2 projects were discussed with details to be worked out including development of a ToR or an MOU by the respective Component Leads based on bilateral discussions with the 2 CLA Leads coordinating the process.

***Partnership with Job Creation Commission:*** RiPA reactivated Mercy Corps' relationship with the Job Creation Commission (JCC). This is primarily based on the strategic objectives/pillars that the commission identified for implementation, designated as 'Plan of Action for Job Creation 2020-2025' and alignment of job creation agendas and also regional plans in the respective RiPA operational regions with the Federal JCC.

***Ongoing Discussions with Ethiopia Meat and Dairy Industry Development institute (EMDIDI):*** As indicated above, the stakeholder discussions started during the last quarter continued on those areas that needed follow-up and those additional areas requiring attention. Some possible areas identified for future collaboration include Hormud Milk Processing Factory, which is currently under the process of equipment installation in Somali Region and on the market linkage creation for livestock traders with export abattoirs to stimulate demand for livestock in pastoral areas during COVID-19.

***Ongoing Discussions with MoA:*** As reiterated, under the MoA, ongoing discussions with the Animal Feed Directorate on the possibility of a pastoral context based feed strategy development

and with Quarantine Import Export and Inspection Directorate on how best streamline the quarantine service to enhance livestock export can be cited as some of the interactions with stakeholders. The follow on discussions will continue to identify key actionable areas in the next quarter.

***Initial Discussions with ATA:*** First round discussion was conducted with ATA on Inputs and One Stop Shop (OSS)/Farm Service Center (FSC) program implementation to share experiences to scale out to RiPA implementation areas. The discussion was focused on lessons from implementation of the OSS in the highland parts of the country and on the possibility of scaling out the model into the Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral areas of the RiPA program targeted areas such as last mile service providers/retails shop establishment for Agri inputs/feed/ PVPs. This will be followed up to identify additional details to explore opportunities further.

***Ethiopia Growth Agent for Agriculture (EGAA) PLC:*** Discussions with the EGAA which is established by affiliated member of Farm Service Centers (FSC) was conducted during the reporting period. This company is engaged on quality agriculture/animal health input wholesalers/distributors for FSC/OSS hence the discussion was focused on the identification of areas of collaboration to support the RiPA target area beneficiaries.

***Discussions with RiPA South Component 3 Team:*** Exploring opportunities for collaboration, discussions were held with RiPA South Component 3 Team Lead, which will continue in the next few months.

***Active engagement in coalition meetings:*** The RiPA Nutrition team actively engaged in the Ethiopian Civil Society Coalition for Scaling-up Nutrition (ECSC-SUN) coalition meetings, and Mercy Corps signed up to lead regional coordination of Nutrition Partners in Somali Region.

***Discussions with the Ministry of Peace (MoP) and PACT:*** The RiPA Peace Building Advisor held discussions with the Ministry of Peace (MoP) and another USAID funded partner, PACT Ethiopia on message development of COVID-19 on peace and social cohesion. A working document is also produced with stakeholders identifying the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders on messaging peace and social cohesion.

### **Progress against work plan**

- Woreda profile data collection for the component is finalized in the majority of the RiPA woredas;
- Staff hiring for Component 4 regional level positions is currently underway. The Nutrition and Wash Coordinators for Afar and Somali Regions are identified and currently on reference checks and is expected to be finalized by early July. The staff are expected to join sometime in August. The Afar Nutrition and Wash Specialist is going to be readvertized because no females qualified to proceed to oral interviews after failing the written assessment. RiPA has a target of having 40% females and also considering the sensitivity of women and girl adolescent health, the project is willing to readvertize and

have a candidate who is more befitting for this role. Oromia and Somali Region Nutrition and Wash Specialists have taken written exams and the successful candidates will take oral interviews once Internet is activated.

## **Crisis Modifier**

No crisis modifier activities were implemented during the period of reporting. Yet, discussions around a possible activation of the crisis modifier, both for the COVID-19 and locusts crises, have taken place internally.

## **Cross-cutting themes**

### **i. Gender and Youth**

#### **Objective 1.7 Improved Gender disparities in drought and conflict response.**

***Output 1.7.1:*** Gender-transformative response to drought and conflict provided

***Activity 1.7.1.1:*** In partnership with MoWYC, undertake rapid gender analysis in drought/conflict affected areas to understand gender differences in impact of shocks and develop strategies for female-focused drought and conflict response

This Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) is being conducted to provide information about the different needs, risks, capacities and coping strategies of women, men, boys and girls in RiPA project implementation areas following the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia since April, 2020. The assessment further aims to understand the gender roles and relations and how they may change as a result of a crisis. The RGA is conducted using secondary information from different global and national assessments and articles on the impact of COVID-19 on gender. In order to capture unique features and situations of project targets, the assessment also used CARE secondary data review tool for field team to discuss on their observation and records on the impact of the pandemic and related restrictions. Accordingly, the RGA will provide practical programming and operational recommendations to meet the different needs of women, men, boys and girls and to ensure ‘do no harm’. The necessary secondary documents and articles for RGA were reviewed; the final report will be shared once the complete information is received from Afar and Somali when the Internet network is back.

***Activity 1.7.1.4:*** Gender mainstreaming - Year 1 – 2 regional gender assessments conducted by the RiPA Gender team. Also linked to baseline CLA activities. Output – Gender strategy. As a startup for gender mainstreaming RiPA will organize SAA training of trainers’ events in Afar and Somali Region.



Ensuring gender integration in the project DIP was one of the preliminary activities given emphasis at the earlier stages of the project. Gender aspects are incorporated in each project component as well as the crisis modifier plan through careful reviewing and understanding of the project objectives. In line with this, virtual discussions and orientations were hosted for updates and creating common understanding among component leads for better integration and actualization of intended gender activities.

RiPA hired a new Gender and Social Accountability Advisor in April and so far ensured virtual gender training provision to 7 (3 female, 4 male) CARE and 14 (4 female, 10 male) MC staff in June, 2020. The CARE and MC gender team conducted the training using Power Point presentations covering various gender topics; basic gender concepts, gender in RiPA project and the role of staff in ensuring integration of gender in each of the project components. In addition to these, the training was complemented with discussions based on participants' experience and cultural contexts of implementation areas. The MC Gender Mainstreaming Advisor collaborated in facilitating the training given for MC team. Meanwhile, CARE RiPA is in the process of recruiting gender specialists for Afar and Somali Regions in the near future.

## **ii. Peacebuilding**

### **Output 1.6: Conflict resolution mechanisms strengthened**

*Conducting rapid impact assessment of COVID-19 on peace and social cohesion:* Because of the pandemic and restrictive measures of the state of emergency, RiPA hired individual consultants from JigJiga University to conduct assessment of COVID-19 on peace and social cohesion in Somali Region. Tools and methodology of the assessment were developed by the RiPA team with consultants jointly reviewing and finalizing them. Other preparatory works such as development of terms of reference, scope of work, purchase request, and key informant interview consent form development were also conducted.

Orientation and discussion was also made with consultants about the objectives and deliverables of the assessment. Consequently, consultants developed inception report and based on the assessment tool, 25 key informant interviews were held with community representatives, local government officials, traders and local civil society organizations in 5 selected target woredas. The rapid assessment also involved 10 focus group discussions with community representatives, clan leaders, youth and women in the 5 target woredas of the Somali Region. Data were collected and transcribed. Assessment response analyses were started and will be finalized in the next quarter.

*Scope of work preparation on strengthening peace and social cohesion messaging through media:* Activities on message development has not yet taken place and is awaiting the findings of the assessment notwithstanding the delay from the Ministry of Peace for collaboration on message development.



*Assessing the strength and weaknesses of the existing Early Warning System:* During the reporting period, basic information of the Woreda profile data were collected from the RiPA target areas focusing on peace and conflict to identify and inform intervention of the early warning system for Year 1. As a result of the Woreda profile, RiPA identified the pilot early warning system in its geographic areas. Since, the pilot is in the inception stage; the strength and weaknesses of the existing early warning system were not identified. Assessment responses of the Woreda profile data will be analyzed and shared in the next quarter.

*Strengthening coordination, collaboration and learning mechanisms through technical working groups:* During the reporting period, RiPA staff drafted a ToR for the establishment of technical working group at the national and regional level with the aim of information sharing, improving communication and capacity development through lessons learned. And thereby strengthening coordination and collaboration with conflict and governance stakeholders at national and regional levels.

*Development of peace and conflict assessment tool:* In order to ensure close collaboration between components, RiPA's Peace Building Advisor drafted a ToR on conflict assessment tool and shared it with Component 1 team to conduct assessment and capture relevant information focusing on peace and conflict for the Afar Cluster. RiPA also developed and shared ToR and assessment tool for rapid assessment of COVID-19 on peace and social cohesion for Afar cluster.

*Developing training materials on conflict and Do No Harm:* RiPA staff collected different secondary sources on conflict and Do No Harm and the development of training material will start in the next quarter.

*Reviewing the results chain and PRM curriculum:* The Peace Building Advisor also reviewed the results chain and logframe and worked on indicators for the resilience outcomes and target beneficiaries for regional agreement focused on peace and social cohesion.

#### **Highlights requiring USAID attention/involvement**

Official approval of Regional Agreement.

#### **Highlights requiring USAID attention/involvement**

None.

#### **Capacity Building**

The RiPA team needs to think through capacity building activities in the context of COVID-19 and new remote working practices.

#### **Challenges, issues, risk management**

- Working from home due to COVID-19 has affected the smooth and timely business communication among RiPA components, team members and partners;
- Government focus diverted to Responding to COVID-19 as well as ensuring national security and safety issues has taken them away from their regular schedules
- Unpredictability of COVID-19 is affecting the pace of the redirection activity implementation;
- Unrest and tensions in different parts of the country and specifically RiPA implementation areas is imposing further restrictions on movement for information gathering from different stakeholders/actors of the government, community and private sector actors;
- The enterprise support through stimulus package might need to cover additional woredas beyond the originally planned 6, and more enterprises (225 enterprises were planned for 6 months) as the assessment has clearly established that the shock has hard hit enterprise performance across the region;
- Capacity, willingness and interest of private sector actors for partnership might be lower than expected during this period as the pandemic has disrupted business function both operationally and financially affecting their capacity for active engagement and cost sharing, as well as diversification of activities;
- Movement restriction as a result of COVID-19 continued to be a challenge affecting the field level activity implementation. Lately, Internet disruptions and bleak security situations become additional challenges for the remote program implementation support; and
- The COVID-19 confirmed positive reported cases is on the rise in Ethiopia but people appeared to become more complacent and relaxed about following precautionary levels.

### **Lessons learned**

In order to ensure smooth and speedy startup of activities, RiPA recognizes the importance of relationship building with the field team. Despite the new modality of telecommuting, RiPA managed to build trust and relationships among team members by proactively engaging with the field team from the initial steps of activity implementation, providing support as necessary.

In case of emergencies, it is important to quickly redirect project focus and deal with lifesaving issues through either redirection or crisis modifier funds.

## **III. Cumulative List of Reports/Studies/Documents on Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)**

Feed the Future Ethiopia Resilience in Pastoral Areas (RiPA) Quarter 2 FY20 Report (January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2020), April 2020.

Economic Impact of COVID-19 in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, Assessment and Recommendations, June 2020.

## IV. Plans for next quarter

### **Component 1: Improved Disaster Risk Management Systems and Capacity Plans and expected outputs for the next quarter**

- Support regional DRM actors to improve preparedness and response to COVID-19 and Desert Locust;
- Participate on different level task forces, working groups and stakeholder platforms to influence improved coordination;
- Continue PSP advisory dissemination to wider community, monitor advisory dissemination and record impact;
- Continue working with Afar DPFSPCO in repairing and revitalizing the regional DRM website for improved coordination communication and information dissemination;
- Ensure DRM team takes online ToT training on updated CVCA tool;
- Develop 3Cs approach paper in preparation for introducing it as a RiPA agenda for improved coordination of systems;
- Broker partnerships with existing digital platforms with potential partners such as PCI, design partnerships and sign MoU;
- Improve the capacity of DPFSPCO in coordinating virtual meetings;
- Support Afar region BoLANRD on desert locust control as unexpected large area gets affected; and
- RiPA DRM-NRM team will initiate discussions with USAID LGA project for collaboration and support from the LLRP to design and develop program implementation methodologies, mainly in the application of PRM Investment Plan approach as part of the PRM scale up activities.

### **Component 2: Diversified and Sustainable Economic Opportunities for People Transitioning out of Pastoralism**

2.1 Based on Year 1 DIP, kick off standard activity implementation of prioritized activities in the respective regions

- 2.1.1 Technical training providers adopt more inclusive services for women, youth and PWD TOPs, and provide an effective pathway to entrepreneurship and employment
- 2.1.1.1 Conduct landscape mapping of public and private technical training providers, assessing management and operational gaps in marketing and delivering services to women, youth and People With Disability (PWD) TOPs
- 2.1.1.2 Strengthen capacity of public and private technical training providers to deliver market-relevant short-term skills with integrated work readiness and life skills modules into their curricula appropriate for male and female TOPs, across diverse clans and ethnic groups

2.1.2 Business development services and entrepreneurship training targeting women and youth is expanded and improved, including innovative and tech-enabled services

- 2.1.2.2 Work with government One-Stop Centers, BDS providers and private sector businesses to pilot and promote uptake of innovative and risk-sensitive on job entrepreneurship training models that enhance impact and scale, including psychology-based entrepreneurship training (N.B: this activity is least prioritized for implementation for the period July –September 2020 but is indicated to take any arising opportunities to support enterprises in integration with other components)
- 2.1.2.3 Introduce platforms for peer-to-peer business mentorship, such as Mercy Corps' successful MicroMentor approach

2.1.4 Government institutions and Business Management Organizations (BMOs) improve the enabling environment and promote a dynamic, conflict-sensitive private sector, protecting the rights of pastoralists and employees

- 2.1.4.1 Support regional Chambers of Commerce, Trade and Industry Bureau, and Bureau of Finance to advocate for an improved investment policy environment and ease of doing business to develop strategies to encourage investment in key conflict-sensitive and resilient growth sectors

2.2.2 Small and Medium Enterprises expand and strengthen their business in the context of shocks and stresses, creating new employment opportunities for female and youth TOPs in pastoral areas

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2.3.2 MFIs and Banks expand and improve their services (including Digi-Fin) to increase financial inclusion and support diversified opportunities for TOPs and strengthened pastoral and agro-pastoral market systems

- 2.3.2.1 Partner with MFIs to extend their reach into target areas through opening new branches and promoting their services to target groups
- 2.3.2.2 Strengthen the capacity of MFIs and banks to introduce and expand mobile and agent banking through selecting and training networks of agents

2.2 Compile, analyze and share 'woreda profile' information focusing on C2-C3 key data to inform intervention rollout

### **Component 3: Intensified and Sustained Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Production and Marketing**

Most of the activities planned to be finalized during the current reporting period did not progress as intended hence it is carried over to the next quarter:

- Based on the situation of movement restrictions, make effort to finalize Livestock/Crop market assessment to further understand the context in the target area (*Activity 3.1.1.1*)

*In partnership with the Pastoralist Areas Development Commission and Trade and Market Development Bureau, Irrigation Development Office and other government stakeholders, conduct rapid gender-sensitive livestock and crop market system assessments to update existing knowledge, and develop a context-specific strategy outlining a clear pathway to modern and resilient livestock and crop production in lowland areas)*

- Complete inventory of available training materials aligned with the needs of component activity focus areas (*Activity 3.1.1.2 Support local universities, regional Agricultural/Pastoralist Bureaus and research institutions to develop contextualized gender transformative pastoralist extension services (including animal health, herd management, water and soil conservation, fodder production, post-harvest management), that responds to current and emerging climate, conflict and economic risks*);
- Start Regional Specific Feed strategy implementation guideline/manuals development (*Activity 3.1.2.1 Work with Agricultural/Pastoralist Bureaus and Research Institutions to develop Regional Strategies for resilient feed and fodder market system development*) based on partners' feedback;
- Continue working on the establishment/expansion process of at least 1 Private Veterinary Pharmacy (PVP) in the selected RiPA program area (*Activity 3.1.3.1 Through partnerships with regional veterinary wholesalers, facilitate the conflict-sensitive expansion and strengthening of market-driven and gender transformative animal health services through Private Veterinary Pharmacies (PVPs) and mini-PVPs and Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs)*);
- Start the identification and mapping of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) and fresh graduates from veterinary universities to become market-driven last-mile providers of animal health services in the RiPA target area (*activity 3.1.3.2 Depending on context, support Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) and fresh graduates from veterinary universities to become market-driven last-mile providers of animal health and AI services, through linkages with PVPs, entrepreneurship training and linkages with financial service providers*);
- Continue ongoing collaboration efforts with MoA-Feed and Quarantine Directorate, EMDIDI, ATA and ELTA; and
- Finalize implementation of planned re-direction activity (i.e. stimulate shoat offtake) to respond to the impact of COVID-19.

#### **Component 4: Improved and Sustained Nutrition and Hygiene Practices**

- Finalize recruitment of Component 4 regional level team including orientation and onboarding;
- Refine the Woreda profiles;
- Develop Year-2 Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) of Component-4;

#### **Objective 4.1: Improved nutrition status of targeted households**

- Finalize printing and distribution of tailor made SBCC messages for COVID-19 preventions;
- Secondary data review for the Barrier analyses surveys, woreda assessments and crop/livestock assessments;
- Support Ministry of Health in facilitating Mother, Young Infant and Child Nutrition (MYICN) training adapted for COVID-19 response for Somali, Afar and Oromia health experts;
- Activity 4.1.1.1. Identify availability of high value and nutritious crops, such as soya beans, mung beans, sesame, vegetables (including green leafy vegetables), and animal source food to recommend value chains for production and market systems development. The RIPA team will develop the Scope of Work (SOW) and assessment tools for this assessment. Data collection schedules will be discussed with government especially in line of government restrictions for COVID-19;
- Activity 4.1.1.4. The team will develop the capacity mapping tool for agriculture extension workers (AEW) and Development agents in RIPA supported woredas; and
- Activity 4.1.3.1. Identify and analyze food consumption behaviors among household members. The RIPA team will invest in deep secondary data review on food consumption patterns of pastoral and agro pastoral households.

#### **Objective 4.2 : Strengthened sanitation and hygiene outcomes of targeted households**

- Finalize hand washing facilities procurement and installation in critical places i.e. at MFI agents, health centers and Livestock markets;
- Implement COVID-19 Awareness creation and raising activities through supporting Ministry of Health (MOH) on promoting social distancing, Hygiene promotion and self-awareness on symptoms of COVID-19 and self-referral to the nearest health facility;
- Activity 4.2.1.2. Map out water and sanitation management structures at community level and draw capacity strengthening and execution plans. During the next quarter, the component 4 team will design relevant tools to benchmark water sanitation structures and information from existing WASH partners like Low Land WASH will be of paramount importance as secondary data source.

#### **Objective 4.3: Institutionalization of nutrition specific and sensitive interventions into government systems**

- Attend Federal level bi-weekly meetings for ECSC-SUN coalition and engage the Somali RBH to set up a regional level ECSC-SUN coalition;
- Hold strategic meetings with RIPA South on collaboration;

## **Peacebuilding:**

### **Output 1.6** *Conflict resolution mechanisms strengthened*

- Finalizing assessment response analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on peace and social cohesion;
- Developing message on peace and social cohesion based on the findings of the rapid assessment of COVID-19 for dissemination to the target beneficiaries through community radio;
- Developing scope of work on message dissemination on peace and social cohesion’
- Compiling, analyzing and sharing Woreda Profile information focused on conflict and peace;
- Developing Training materials and Conducting training on conflict and Do No Harm for Mercy Corps RiPA staff, with support from Mercy Corps’ global Technical Support Unit (TSU);
- Review the PRM curriculum; and
- Work on DIP for Year 2.

## **Expected challenges for next quarter**

Due to the increasing cases of COVID-19 especially in Somali Region, implementation of redirection and standard activities might be slower than expected. In addition, considering movement restrictions and unrest affecting the different parts of the operational areas, conducting the standard integrated market assessment to the level planned might be difficult and hence will need to be revised.

The last week of the quarter had some protests in Addis Ababa and some regions raising security risks for the staff and beneficiaries. The Ethiopian government closed Internet the last day because of this unrest and anticipated to spill over into the next quarter. This Internet blackout will affect RIPAs remote working strategy as well as supporting field level program implementation. Coupled with these is the COVID-19 pandemic that was on the rise in Ethiopia but people becoming more complacent and relaxed about following precautionary levels. On the other hand, lack of coordination from the relevant government offices of Ethiopia on message development may hinder progress on social cohesion messaging



## **Annex A: Success Story**

### **Building sustainable rangeland management systems through the adoption of a one system approach.**

#### **Collaborative working relations between the USAID Resilience in Pastoralist Areas (RiPA)<sup>2</sup> program and the USAID Land Governance Activity (LGA)<sup>3</sup>**

USAID RiPA South and RiPA North programs and the USAID LGA program are all new lowland development program investments, designed to build the resilience of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. The RiPA program focuses on improving disaster risk management systems and natural resource management, supporting pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods as well as diversified and alternative livelihoods through market based approaches, strengthening and expanding commercial livestock production systems, land management and tenure systems and improving household level food, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation management. The LGA program is working on pastoral area communal land management systems and the design, development and establishment of appropriate communal land tenure systems.

These two new programs are in an exciting and somewhat unique position in that they build on significant breakthrough successes in rangeland management from their previous USAID programs<sup>4</sup>. These new investment programs have been purposely positioned by USAID to collaborate and combine working activities focused on the continued improvement and strengthening of rangeland management systems in Ethiopia's lowlands.

In light of this position, it is proposed that these new USAID program actions can build a comprehensive sustainable rangeland management system. This can be achieved by adopting the concept of a 1 system approach and through the combining of existing institutional knowledge, skills, tools and approaches developed for sustainable rangeland management. We will work to combine and merge the different rangeland management approaches that have been developed to date, by the respective organizations that are implementing the RiPA and LGA programs. It is also recommended that the group draw on other rangeland management tools and approaches, as seen fit and appropriate, that will compliment, strengthen and complete an overall sustainable rangeland management system.

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<sup>2</sup> The RiPA program is made up of two consortia groups, RiPA North led by Mercy Corps in partnership with CARE. RiPA North's work is focused on Somali, Afar Regions and east Oromia. RiPA South is led by PCI working in partnership with IDE and GOAL. RiPA South is working in south and south east Oromia, south Somali Region and South Omo.

<sup>3</sup> The LGA is led by Tetra Tech. LGA works across all pastoralist areas, principally Southern Oromia, Afar and Somali Regions.

<sup>4</sup> The RiPA investment is a follow on program from the previous USAID PRIME and REVIVE programs. LGA is a follow on program from the previous USAID LAND program.

The starting point of this collaborative one system approach is the set up and functioning of a Sustainable Rangeland Management Working Group. The Sustainable Rangeland Management Working Group will act as the main vehicle for the collaborative work. It is proposed that initially the Working Group will have a small membership, comprising of the main RiPA and LGA actors; Mercy Corps and CARE, PCI, IDE and GOAL and Tetra Tech. This will allow for these organization to work efficiently and effectively together.

Once the new sustainable rangeland management system is developed, the membership of the Sustainable Rangeland Management Working Group will be expanded to involve other key lowland actors, such as the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Program (LLRP) and the GIZ Strengthening Drought Resilience program. The Working Group will also interact closely with other lowland networks and coordination bodies, such as Ministry of Agriculture led Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Task Force (PAPTF).

It is also proposed that the US Forest Service (USFS), who have been working alongside USAID Pastoralist Area programs over the last 15 years<sup>5</sup>, are also engaged within this new Sustainable Rangeland Management Working Group. The USFS is currently conducting an assessment of rangeland management approaches across a number of East African countries. This wider rangeland management assessment work will compliment and add value to this RiPA–LGA collaborative initiative.

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<sup>5</sup> USFS has been working in Ethiopia since circa 2005 supporting the USAID funded Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiatives (PLI I 2004-08 and II 2008-12) as well as USAID Pastoralist Resilience Improved through Market Expansion (PRIME 2012-2019).

**Building sustainable rangeland management systems through the adoption of a 1 system approach.**

**Sustainable Rangeland Management** can be defined as the implementation of a set of activities that aims to ensure a sustained yield of rangeland products, whilst protecting, restoring and improving the basic rangeland resources of; soil, water, and plant and animal life.

In the context of Ethiopia's rangelands, this means a set of management activities that aim to balance the intensive use of grass and shrub vegetation and perennial/seasonal water resources by herds of grazing and browsing livestock within an extensive livestock production system, with the expanding use of cultivable land for rain-fed and irrigation based crop production. The herds of livestock are managed by groups of semi nomadic pastoralists and the use of cultivable land is by groups of settled agro-pastoralists and commercial agricultural investments.

It is proposed that the actual rangeland management systems design work will focus on four key aspects of rangeland management systems development work. These four aspects are; Participatory Rangeland Management<sup>6</sup>; AfriScout digital systems<sup>7</sup>; Communal Land Tenure Systems<sup>8</sup>; Holistic Management<sup>9</sup>. This is depicted in the diagram below.



<sup>6</sup> Participatory Rangeland Management was developed and piloted under PLI I & II, and has been implemented at scale by Mercy Corps and CARE under the USAID PRIME program (2012-19).

<sup>7</sup> AfriScout digital systems have been developed through the innovative work of PCI under the USAID REVIVE program (2012-2017).

<sup>8</sup> Communal Land Tenure systems have been developed by Tetra Tech, working closely with PRIME, under the USAID LAND program (2012-18)

<sup>9</sup> Holistic Management is a type of rangeland Management developed by Dr Alan Savory working in Zimbabwe over the last 20 years.